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In the first of these lines the words *rising*, *falling*, with the aid of different sized letters, are arranged in an ascending and descending form, like the gamut in musick, and by this means paint to the eye as well as the imagination the scene they describe. The English poem is followed by a short Latin one, in which the initials of the party, consisting of ten, are given by taking the first letter of the line as follows ;

D. H orrendum fragili, nullo Rectore carina,
 E. S ospite per liquidos campos tetendimus iter ;
 G. B ruma pressum atque Hyeme, nubiferaque Procella, &c.

Italian Drama.

THE following remarks are translated principally from an article in the *Biblioteca Analitica*, a periodical work of considerable merit formerly published in Naples, but suppressed on the accession of the present king to the throne. These remarks are valuable as coming from Italy, and expressing the opinions, which the Italians themselves entertain of their claims in the department of dramattick compositions. They probably place themselves too high, but it has long been our belief, that the more Italian literature is known, the more it will be found to contain worthy of our study and admiration. The article from which we take the following, is a review of the sixth volume of Ginquené's Literary history of Italy.

On the revival of letters in Italy, while the other nations of Europe still amused themselves with wretched farces, the Italian authors, yielding to the happy impulse given them in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, attempted to infuse that spirit and dignity into dramattick compositions, which had already been communicated with so much success to the lyrick and epick. The first performance of much merit was the *Sophonisba* of Trissino, dedicated to Leo X. Many other writers of high claims soon followed, and even Tasso was ambitious to try his fortune in the career of tragedy and produced his *Torrismond*.

We observe in the Italian tragedies of that period the same defect which had been common among the Latins ;— they gave representations of the manners and customs of other countries, and not those of Italy.

Besides this capital defect, these tragedies were extremely

deficient both in style and versification. They were much more in the tone of lyric poetry, than of the kind adapted to tragedy, and the lines were too uniform and monotonous. The verse and the style of tragedy were not yet created. Maffei began this creation, but Alfieri has brought it to perfection. Whatever may have been said by some Italian critics and poets, who wished to transfer the lyric style to tragedy, that of Alfieri will forever be the true style of Italian tragedy. It is sufficient to compare the productions of Alfieri with the translations of some French tragedies by Cesarotti, to be fully convinced of the correctness of these remarks. Alfieri himself discovers some slight faults, which have been the subjects of censure, but he has happily withstood the ill natured criticisms, which a few feeble versifiers have directed against him. His style is not only good, but could hardly be improved.

It must be allowed that the Italians were the restorers of tragedy among the moderns. "Without renouncing the honour which belongs to ourselves," says the French writer, "without admiring beyond measure the Italian poets, who have preceded us, and whom we have surpassed, without attempting to extenuate the defects of their ancient stage, they certainly deserve great credit, and our warmest gratitude, for what they have accomplished. To take them now for models would be to go backwards; but yet we ought not to deny the great advantage we have received by having formerly taken them." The Italians ought to be the more obliged to Ginquené for thus rendering them justice, as they have great reason to complain of the ill founded opinions of Marmontel and La Harpe.

The same justness and depth of remark, which he discovers in speaking of tragedy, are also visible through the rest of the volume, in which he treats of comedy.

The ardour, which prevailed in Italy during the fifteenth century for the study of the Greek and Latin languages, necessarily led to a knowledge of the ancient authors. The comedies of Terence and Plautus were acted at Rome, Ferrara, and Florence, both in Latin and Italian; but new plots were soon formed, new dialogues written, and modern characters and adventures brought upon the stage. The academy de' Rozzi in Siena gave the first example of this novelty. Very soon appeared the *Calandria* of Cardinal Bibiena, the *Mandragora* of Machiavel, and the *Suppositi* of Ariosto. In

all the comedies of these times, prevailing customs are little regarded, and religious persons and opinions are treated with no great civility ; but we find in many of them, the wit of Plautus in all its amenity, and that inimitable comick humour, sought in vain in the Italian comedies of later times ;—that wit, we mean, which, to use the expression of Horace, *quatit populum risu*.

This laughter, however, did not arise from the ridiculousness of the incidents only, but from the vivacity of the style and expressions ; and it must be confessed, that single Italian authors, especially those of the last century, having wished to proscribe the common use of the Tuscan dialect, and to limit themselves to that only, which they call the general language of Italy, it has been impossible for them to write with the same force and vivacity. This is, in our opinion, a great evil. The Tuscan dialect, which contains in itself this pretended general language of Italy, abounds in many forms of expression of uncommon elegance, great delicacy, and a refinement truly Attick. It is impossible to imagine a language better adapted to comedy than this. The Italian authors of the last age have endeavoured to bring into disrepute, and even to hold up to ridicule, this admirable dialect, and the result has been, that all the Italian comedies, since then, have been cold and insipid.

But let us return to the comedy of the fourteenth century.

“The Italian comedy of this period,” says Ginquené, “was without doubt imperfect, but still it was comedy. We [the French] were even worse. A man appeared in our nation, whose conception of what constituted true comedy was more correct than that of any who had preceded him. But before Moliere, and even during his time, where could be found a comedy which could be compared with the *Calandria*, *Mandragora*, or the best theatrical pieces of Ariosto, and many others ? After Moliere the case is widely different ; the French comedy, that is, the comedy of character and manners, prevailed. The Italians themselves have since imitated him, who, from their writers alone, had drawn the most profound secrets of his art ; and that art has been brought to perfection on their theatre, as well as on our own. Let us treat them with more justice than we have hitherto done ; but let them be equally just towards us. Let us confess that the Italians were the first to revive good comedy ; and let them own that we have since surpassed them. Their comedies of the sixteenth century are superiour to any, which at that time existed in any part of

Europe, and approach near to the models, which they laboured to imitate; but the place, which belongs to the author of the *Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope*, must be assigned not only above their best comick poets, but even above those of the ancients."

Another kind of dramatick poetry arose towards the close of the sixteenth century, that glorious era of Italian resuscitation. This was the Pastoral Fable, which portrays, as our author justly remarks, the enchantment and the innocence of that imaginary period, which we call the golden age; the primitive, or rather the refined purity of the sentiments of love; and the romantick events arising from that tender passion. After many attempts, more or less fortunate, a great man, who had received the palm for epick poetry, also bore it away in the pastoral drama. Tasso composed his *Aminta*, and so much did he excel in this kind of writing, that he carried it at once to perfection. Guarini followed him, and even dared to contend with him for a prize; and we must confess, that, if he does not equal him in smoothness and correctness of style, he is not inferiour in some passages, where he endeavours to paint the passions, and to expose to view the mysterious working of the human heart.

An invention which also belongs to Italy, which may be referred to the same age, and which forms a great epocha in the most enchanting of the arts, is the musical drama. The union of musick and poetry is very ancient. Among the Greeks, tragedy itself was sung, and accompanied with instruments. This custom was imparted by them to the Latins, but it quickly passed away after the invasion of the barbarians. The world owes to Tuscany the revival of theatrical musick. The court of Florence, which piqued itself upon surpassing in splendour all other courts, gave the first example of those mythological representations, in which a union of all the fine arts offered to the imagination a most magnificent and alluring spectacle.

"But a great step still remained to be taken, before the musical drama should arrive at that state of perfection, to which it was soon after carried. In the narrative, and even in the dialogue of the intermediate parts, every thing was sung by many voices in the style of madrigals. These pieces succeeded each other without any connexion or transition. The singing ceased, and began again in the same strain, and the representations were conducted by various persons, in a kind of musical language, which accom-

odated itself to the rapidity of the dialogue, and supplied the place of declamation, without ceasing to be musick. Emilio 'del Cavalliere is said to have attempted in Florence, in 1590, the first play in which the action was continued, divided into scenes, and the whole set to musick. He wrote, after this manner, two pastorals, entitled, the *Despair of Filenus* and the *Satyr*."

The society, calling themselves the friends of the arts, sought with indefatigable zeal, to form that continued declamation, which the Greeks called *melopea*. The young poet, Octavius Rinuccini, James Peri, a learned writer, and Julius Caccini, a celebrated singer, after much study and various attempts, produced at last a kind of melopea, by setting the declamations to musick. They made a trial of it in the pastoral of *Daphne*, written by the first, and set to musick by the two last. After a short time they composed another piece from the fable of Eurydice and Orpheus; which was performed with great splendour in the year 1600, at the celebration of the marriage of Maria de Medici with Henry IV. The effect which it produced was beyond description. They knew not what name to give to this new species of declamation, and finally called it recitative, that is, proper for dramatick narrations. In 1608, Rinuccini wrote a third lyrick drama, entitled *Arianna*, which is now considered a model. It was set to musick by Claudius Monteverde. To the Tuscans, then, we are indebted for the invention of the regular lyrick drama, and theatrical musick, in which the musical pieces are happily united into a continued composition by the intervention of the musical declamation.

It still remained to bring forward the musical comedy, and the comick opera. Horatio Vecchi, a Modanese, at the same time a poet and musician first added this kind of performance to the others, towards the close of the sixteenth century. He published his *Anti-parnassus*, a musical comedy, in 1597. Ginquené closes his volume with the following remarks, by which it may be seen what obligations modern nations have been under to Italy, and how many sources of pleasure and refinement it has afforded.

"In the dramatick art generally," says he, "this remarkable age of Leo X, left something to be done by those which succeeded; but if we cast a glance on the picture which Italy here presents, we shall see, that without mentioning the melo drama, and its connexion with the arts, it had tragedies founded on history,

as well as fictitious, full of interesting and terrible incidents; that it had comedies of character and plot, in which vice and folly were represented as they should be; that it had, finally, pastorals abounding in delicacy, imagination, and beauty. It created and retained these treasures, and had increased them even to excess, before a single dramattick performance had appeared on any other theatre in Europe, which was in any degree distinguished for genius, reason, or sentiment.

Preamble to a letter from the Dey of Algiers to the President of the U. S. Translated from the Arabick.

[This curious specimen of the modern regal style of the East, was sent to us from the Mediterranean, by a gentleman who was at Algiers soon after the Dey's letter was written, and who was acquainted with our consul in that place. We can vouch, therefore, for its genuineness, and the accuracy of the translation.]

WITH the aid and assistance of Divinity, and in the reign of our Sovereign, the Asylum of the world, powerful and great monarch, transactor of all good actions, the best of men, the shadow of God, Director of the Good Order, king of kings, supreme ruler of the world, emperour of the earth, emulator of Alexander the Great, possessor of great forces, sovereign of the two worlds, and of the seas, king of Arabia and Persia, emperour, son of an emperour, and conqueror, *Mahmood Kan*, (may God end his life with prosperity, and his reign be everlasting and glorious,) his humble and obedient servant, actual sovereign, governour, and chief of Algiers, submitted forever to the order of his imperial Majesty's noble throne, *Omar Pasha* (may his government be happy and prosperous);—

To his Majesty the emperour of America, its adjacent and dependent provinces and coasts, and wherever his government may extend, our noble friend, the support of kings of the nations of Jesus, the pillar of all Christian sovereigns, the most glorious amongst the princes, elected amongst many lords and nobles, the happy, the great, the amiable James Madison, emperour of America, (may his reign be happy and glorious, and his life long and prosperous,) wishing him long possession of the seat of his blessed throne, and long life and health, amen;—hoping that your health is in good state, I inform you that mine is excellent (thanks to the Supreme Being,)